



# In, Up and Mixed:

## An Occasional Newsletter for the Planning Division, City of Fresno

**Volume 2:1 April 2009**

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### ***Sowing Seeds for Farmers' Markets and Community Gardens*** ***Sophia Pagoulatos, Planning Manager***

Fresno County is the most productive agricultural county in the nation, with annual sales of over 3 billion dollars. So why does the city of Fresno have only 7 farmers' markets, while Sacramento has 12 and San Diego has 9? A large collaboration of organizations and farmers are working together to address this issue, and we may soon see more farmers' markets sprouting up as a result. On February 23, 2009, over 100 farmers, health officials, nutrition advocates and government leaders gathered at the Fresno Farmers' Market Workshop to exchange ideas about creating more farmers' markets in Fresno.

Opportunity for new markets is at a high point, with increasing production costs pushing small farmers toward direct sales, and with consumer demand increasing. A new government program is also being launched which will create specialized food subsidies (previously known as food "stamps") to be used exclusively for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables. This is expected to be an additional incentive for the creation of farmers' markets.

The role of the City of Fresno Planning Department has been to remove governmental barriers to the creation of farmers' markets while ensuring their harmonious integration within the surrounding neighborhood. Toward that end, the city adopted changes to its zoning code which defined farmers' markets and stipulated that they be allowed in all commercial zone districts and the R-1 district with a conditional use permit. Additional planning endeavors include creation of design guidelines for farmers' markets, and for an application fee structure that is affordable to small farmers.

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Currently, there are several farmers' markets in the planning process, including one on the Fulton Mall and one in the Pinedale neighborhood.



**Photo: Darlene Holland  
West Fresno Health Care Coalition, Inc.**

Farmers' markets are just one venue for promoting local agriculture; another is community gardens. A community garden summit was held on February 11, 2009 which was attended by over 150 people. Next steps include conducting an inventory of community gardens and consideration of possible changes to the zoning ordinance to better facilitate these gardens. In addition, local food advocates are exploring different organizational models and funding strategies to ensure that any gardens created are sustainable over time.

As the changing economy pinches both households and farmers, supporting locally grown agriculture benefits both Fresno farmers and Fresno consumers by keeping food dollars in local circulation and by providing healthy fresh produce to Fresno residents.

*(For more information contact Sophia Pagoulatos at (559) 621-8062)*

## **Why Design Review?**

**Will Tackett, Planner III**

One of the Goals of the 2025 Fresno General Plan is to, "develop urban design strategies to improve Fresno's visual image and enhance its form and function." Supporting this goal are a host of policies written into community and specific plans for regional areas of the city, as well as the City of Fresno design guidelines for infill development. For the purposes of implementing such policies, design review committees play an important role in protecting the character of our neighborhoods. Two such areas with design review committees are the Tower District and Fulton/Lowell.

These committees are made up of volunteer residents and are appointed by either the Mayor or district Councilmember. Each committee is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations on development proposals, which have the potential to affect the visual appearance and context of properties within their respective areas of the city. How do new buildings complement or respect the character of an existing area? Design review also includes exterior alterations or modifications to existing buildings. Windows, for example, are a critical character defining feature of a home or commercial building and window replacement is therefore carefully reviewed.

The question is often asked as to why anybody should be subjected to recommendations about how they should improve their property! But design review protects that which we hold to be valuable;

our homes, our neighborhoods, and the places we choose to live. Cities such as Carmel and Santa Barbara force strict design guidelines to conserve their “sense of place.” By preserving the quality and integrity of a neighborhood, property values are maintained. Design review helps to ensure the sustainability of our community.

*(Will Tackett serves as the staff to the Tower District Design Review Committee which usually meets the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 4 pm. For more information please call 621-8063)*



## **Nothing *Greener* Than Preserving a Good Old Building, In Place...**

**Karana Hattersley-Drayton  
Historic Preservation Project Manager**

A Seattle developer has the following posted on his company website: “the most basic act of sustainability is to recycle a good old building that’s already in place.” This link between green/sustainable communities and the historic preservation field was the topic of The Sixth National Forum on Historic Preservation held in Baltimore, March 19-21. Several points were made throughout the conference, including the fact that preservation IS all about sustainability, in part because extant buildings have “embodied energy,” or the amount of energy associated with extracting, processing, manufacturing, transporting, and assembling buildings which is lost when the building is demolished and hauled off to the dump (or even recycled). Another complaint voiced frequently at the forum was that the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental

Design) program does not sufficiently credit preservation of existing buildings.

Like many communities throughout the United States the City of Fresno has a Historic Preservation program, founded in 1979. Fresno is unique however in that the planning department has aggressively linked preservation (and public art and other aspects of the City Beautiful) to our incentive Fresno Green Building program. Karana Hattersley-Drayton, Historic Preservation Project Manager for the City, was an invited speaker at the conference and was able to pitch our more holistic approach to sustainability in her paper, “Is Brown the New Green: Balancing Water Conservation with Historic Landscapes in the San Joaquin Valley.” Under Fresno Green developers can receive credits for the retention in place or the relocation of an existing building, for the preservation of a historic landscape and for providing a wayside exhibit for a canal.

*(For more information on Fresno Green, please see [fresnogreen.net](http://fresnogreen.net) or call Karana at (559) 621-8520)*



**Hotel Virginia, HP# 173  
Adaptive Reuse (2008), Romi Bagh and  
Jake Kojikian**

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## Staff Recognition and Awards:

**Sophia Pagoulatos (Planning Manager)** received the 2009 Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program (CCROPP) Cultivator Award for Fresno County at a banquet January 30<sup>th</sup> for her outstanding leadership in promoting healthy eating and active living. As a planner she has effectively linked agriculture, farmers' markets and food accessibility for urban communities with professional planning practices. Congratulations Sophia!



**Congratulations to:**  
Bob Berend, 25 years  
Darrell Unruh, 30 years  
both recently honored by the  
City for their service.

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## Who Do You Call If:

You need a **building permit**?

621-8084 (Vicki Bixler)

For general **planning** questions:

621-8277 (Cecilia Lopez)

Are starting a new **project**: 621-8180

(Susie Williams/Franklin Spees)

**Historic preservation, green building and public art**: 621-8520

(Karana Hattersley-Drayton)

**Tower District Design Review**:

621-8063 (Will Tackett)

**Fulton Lowell Design Review**:

621-8037 (Donn Beedle)

If there is a **vacant** building in your neighborhood: 621-8400

Helpful information for homeowners and **mortgage counseling**: 221-6919

If your **issue or request** is not getting timely attention or a response from **staff**: 621-8049 (Keith Bergthold, Interim Planning Director)

In, Up and Mixed is published by the Planning Division on an occasional basis:

**Editorial team**: Karana Hattersley-Drayton (Editor), Bruce Barnes, Sophia Pagoulatos and Will Tackett

